

**Response from Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**  
**to the Voluntary Action Fund's request for information about**  
**how the Welfare Reform is affecting individuals and communities**

There are four significant welfare organisations working to support people in the Jewish community. They are all based in East Renfrewshire, where the majority of the community live, but provide services to people in other areas, mainly Glasgow and South Lanarkshire.

1. Jewish Care Scotland (JCS)<sup>1</sup>, in a unique partnership with East Renfrewshire Council CHCP, provides a statutory social work service and registered Day Care Services to the Jewish community in the area. Approximately one third of their staff is either seconded from East Renfrewshire Council or have salaries covered by the council. JCS also receives some additional income from Glasgow City Council for individuals who are using their services. In addition to statutory provision, non-statutory support and advocacy is provided by workers employed solely by the charity. JCS volunteers supplement the service in a variety of roles including befriending.
2. Cosgrove Care<sup>2</sup> is a registered social care provider which offers children's support services, supported living, floating support, and supported employment opportunities to people with learning disabilities and people with mental health issues. Whilst Cosgrove Care contracts are primarily with East Renfrewshire Council, they also provide services to individuals in surrounding local authorities and receive requests for services from further afield.
3. Arklet Housing Association<sup>3</sup> (formerly Glasgow Jewish Housing Association) is a major provider of social housing in East Renfrewshire. Arklet works in close co-operation with Jewish Care Scotland and Cosgrove Care and operates two developments specifically for the Jewish community with kosher facilities, as well as mainstream housing in both East Renfrewshire and Glasgow. Access is via East Renfrewshire Housing Register or Arklet's own waiting list.
4. Newark Care is a Registered Charity which operates two purpose-built, 40-bed registered care homes for the elderly in East Renfrewshire, offering residential, nursing, and palliative care and providing kosher catering and an on-site synagogue at each location.

Due to a number of factors, the last three of these services have now been expanded to also encompass the wider community.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jcarescot.org.uk>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cosgrovecare.org.uk>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scottishhousingconnections.org/HA/Arklet/>

In general, the possible impact of Welfare Reform in the Jewish community is no different from the wider community. The only issues we can see that might be specific to the Jewish Community are:

1. The affordability of kosher food. Many Kosher food items are more expensive than their non-kosher equivalents. This will affect individuals and families whose income is reduced as a result of Welfare Reform. It may also affect demand for sheltered and supported housing by making the service charge for places where kosher food is provided unaffordable.
2. Some religious Jewish Orthodox people have large families and they could be adversely affected by both the benefit cap and the changes in child benefit. The number of such families in Scotland is very small, but there may be an increase in families requiring social work support and in applications for charitable funds.

Information provided by the organisations indicates that the current welfare reforms have had/may have the following impact:

#### Jewish Care Scotland:

- Working as part of statutory social work services, JCS will experience the full range of issues associated with Welfare Reform
- Impact on the organisation will include:
  - Training staff to understand and advise clients on Welfare Reform
  - Increasing staff availability to support affected clients
  - An expected increase in applications to its charitable funds from people who experience a loss of income.

#### Cosgrove Care:

- Additional training for staff to understand the changes
- The senior management team and board of directors have spent time assessing and planning for any resulting changes to income for the organisation
- Additional staff time to inform and reassure service users and families, especially in relation to the Work Capability Assessment and changes to Disability Living Allowance. (staff report that the people they work with seem to have little knowledge of how Welfare Reforms might affect them and don't know where to go for advice)
- Strategic planning in relation to supporting young adults affected by the changes in Housing Benefit extending the single room rate for 25-35yr olds
- Potential problems re under-occupancy, especially given profile of housing stock in East Renfrewshire
- Cosgrove's Supported Employment services may experience increased issues with people on low incomes.

#### Newark Care:

- No effect on current residents
- For those seeking admission to Residential Care who may experience a reduction in their income resulting in lower capital, a greater burden will be passed on to the Local Authority,
- Potential to affect staff on lower pay – unsure how big a problem this will be or how this may impact on the organisation.

#### Arklet HA:

- Issues are the same as for all housing associations eg:
  - Sufficient housing stock to accommodate family size and avoid under-occupancy
  - Ability to accommodate under 35s receiving single room rate
  - Direct payment of housing benefit to tenants
  - Actual rent loss as a result of increased arrears and bad debts, additional tenancy terminations and more evictions
  - Cost of increased housing management activity

The last census showed that there are Jewish people in every local authority area in Scotland, and both Jewish Care and Cosgrove Care provide support to people from across the country. These organisations have already been looking at how to develop their service and funding models to accommodate this. It is anticipated that the current Welfare Reforms will lead to an increase in both service need and applications to charitable funds which will be difficult to accommodate within the existing structures

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Note: The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland comprising Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee as well as the more loosely linked groups of the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands, and of students studying in Scottish Universities and Colleges. SCoJeC is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438, and its aims are to advance public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community. It works with others to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality, and represents the Jewish community in Scotland to government and other statutory and official bodies on matters affecting the Jewish community.

In preparing this response we have consulted with organisations and individuals in the Scottish Jewish community who have experience in this field.